From my computer to yours....

It was great to meet all our friends and colleagues during the 26th Annual Meeting of our Society. We missed all of those who were not able to attend and we hope to see you next year.

Following our tradition, we bring out a new edition of the newsletter with the purpose of keeping all the members informed on what is going on in our society and sharing new findings and new developments. We intend to make of this newsletter a way to “keep in touch” during the year; with your help we will do it.

If you have important findings that you would like to share with the members or a subject that you consider worthy of discussion, this is your venue. Please send me your comments and we will include them in our next newsletter.

First I would like to congratulate our new President, Joanne Kwak-Kim. I am confident that under her leadership the society will grow and expand its influence in the field of Reproductive Immunology. We wish her the best luck and success.

And to Peter Hansen, our beloved past president: a big thank you for all your efforts and outstanding leadership.

In name of the society I would like to welcome Stephanie Lee, in her new role as the coordinator of the Society. We already can feel the difference that her role is making; thank you Stephanie for joining us, we look forward to meeting you next year in Canada.

Again, I would like to remind you that although the Annual meeting is a great opportunity to share information and new findings, the lack of communication during those 12 months between meetings creates a vacuum that makes difficult the continuity of our work and objectives.

With your help we can give a real meaning and practical value to this Newsletter and our Society. I am looking forward to hearing from you

Wishing you that 2007 will be a successful and productive year

Best regards from New Heaven

Gil Mor
Secretary
Phone: (203) 785-6294
Fax: (203) 785-4883
E-mail: gil.mor@yale.edu
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Happy New Year! Fellow Reproductive Immunologists:

First, I would like to thank Dr. Peter Hansen for his endless effort and dedication to the Society and Dr. Grant Yeaman for organizing a wonderful Meeting this year. Dr. Hansen has been a great leader and provided a new vision for the Society. I believe his service and dedication for the Society will continue although he has stepped down from the Presidency.

The American Society for Reproductive Immunology was founded in 1981. This year we held 26th Annual Meeting which was a great success, and I am honored to be the 20th President of the Society.

The objectives of the society are to:
- foster the development of reproductive immunology research;
- increase intellectual exchange between clinical and basic branches of reproductive immunology; and
- provide mentoring for new scientists interested in reproductive immunology.

The breadth of the science of the American Society for Reproductive Immunology is very diverse, including clinical and basic sciences in areas such as molecular biology, microbiology, mucosal immunology, genetics, pediatrics, infectious diseases, endocrinology, obstetrics, gynecology, pathology, veterinary medicine and animal science.

Our Society’s membership is also diverse with research being carried out by the leaders in reproductive immunology. Membership promotes the exchange of ideas with the best scientists in the field of reproductive immunology, learning from leaders in our specialty about the cutting edge research to establish new collaboration, to network with other investigators, to establish bond for mentoring, to learn about the latest opportunities for research funding, to establish networking with academia, industry, government, and most importantly, to make a difference in continuing research of our discipline.

I believe our Society’s greatest strength is its diversity. It allows networking, communication and cross-pollination of concepts from several scientific disciplines. ASRI brings together clinicians and basic scientists to discuss contemporary topics in reproductive immunology. As a result, clinical therapies and management are grounded in the most up-to-date science and the goals of basic researchers are made with a clear understanding of the long-range impact of their research for human and veterinary medicine.

The objectives of the ASRI are achieved in two major ways, firstly, as the official sponsor of the AJRI and secondly, through the annual scientific meeting. Although we have achieved a lot through these two avenues, during my term I want to see a significant improvement in these two areas.

The American Journal of Reproductive Immunology is one of two journals devoted to publishing reproductive immunology research. This provides an outlet to the reproductive immunologists that are specifically oriented towards the field of our specialties. Membership, the main driving force of the society, affects journal performance, society funding, and the annual meeting. The journal subscription rate should be continuously increased. I believe with the effort of editorial office and the board, executive council, and members of the Society, we can make this happen.

The Society has held an annual meeting since its inception in 1981 to promote exchange of
scientific information and to foster mentorship. Abstracts from these meetings are published as a part of the American Journal of Reproductive Immunology and many of the plenary papers are included in the journal as well. The past 3 meetings were supported by NIH funding, and we want to continue this support for the next 3 meetings. Since both science and our programs have been enriched every year, funding was provided to the Society. We need to continue this trend but realize that much hard work is needed to procure this funding.

Our greatest strength, diversity is waning. Presentation of clinical science and clinicians’ attendance at the annual meeting needs to be increased.

A Mentoring Program / New Member Welcome Program should be well planned and initiated to encourage new members. I will appoint membership committee members to plan and execute plans for the expansion of our membership.

Continuation of electronic communication, web site management and electronic fund management are a must. The web site committee will have a chance of achieving this goal.

New committee chairs and members have been appointed.

Nomination committee: Peter Hansen (Chair), Don Torry, Carolyn Coulam, Gil Mor (ex-officio), and Koji Koyama (ex-officio).

Awards committee: Alice Gilman-Sachs (Chair), Rudy Ansbacher, Udo Markert, and Troy Ott.

Publication Committee: Christopher Davies (Chair), William Bennett, Surendra Sharma, Petra Arck, Joanne Kwak-Kim (ex officio), and Kenneth Beaman (ex officio).

Web Site Committee: Peter Hansen (Chair), Vikki Abrahams, and Stephanie Lee.

Membership Committee: Judy Luborsky, Jose Teppa, Morgan Peltier, Raj Raghupathy, and Silvia Daher

Program Committee: Charu Kaushic, Anne Croy, Ken Rosenthal, Ali Ashkar, Warren Foster, Judy Luborsky, Grant Yeamen, Charles Wira, Joanne Kwak-Kim, Peter Hansen, Surendra Sharma, Gil Mor, Troy Ott, Kenneth Beaman, Koji Koyama, Mary Brown, Morris Cooper, Peter Ahlering, Ken Beagley, and Debra Anderson

The Society exists for the members’ benefit. William Temple stated that “church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of non-members”. We need to focus on our members. Recruitment of new members enriches and stabilizes our Society and that, in turn, will increase to our benefit.

I would like to end my address with a quote from Brian Tracy:

“Those people who develop the ability to continuously acquire new and better forms of knowledge that they can apply to their work and to their lives will be the movers and shakers in our society for the indefinite future”.

Joanne Kwak-Kim MD
President of ASRI
Joanne.Kwak-Kim@rosalindfranklin.edu

Message from Stephanie Lee

Dear Members of the ASRI:

I am honored and excited to join this august society. Its reputation and professionalism are reflective of its members. My goals are to facilitate communication among the members and the society, increase its membership, and generate more programs and services. You
have my commitment to do my best to achieve these goals. Together, we will achieve them. I ask for your cooperation, support, and patience, as we work toward our goals. I look forward to working and communicating with, as well as meeting, each of you. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your invaluable thoughts and concerns.

Foremost on my list of tasks to tackle is to increase our membership and supporters for the next Annual Meeting. I would very much welcome and appreciate any leads on potential new members and supporters. Please take some time to think about that and let me know your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Ohr Lee
slee@theasri.org

Membership Dues

Dear Members:

Greetings from Chicago! I would like to thank all of you who have renewed your membership for 2007. I would like to remind those of you who have not renewed membership yet. We are happy and honored to have all of you in our Society. Membership fees are our main source of income for the Society, and funding sources are getting tighter, due to increase in costs. Our membership fee has remained constant for a long time. Starting 2007, however, there will be an increase in regular membership dues from $170 to $220.

Please renew your membership as soon as possible. We are looking forward to another fruitful year in reproductive immunology.

Best regards,

Joanne Kwak-Kim

NOTES OF ATTENTION:

NIH and grants for Reproductive Immunology

I am sure everybody is aware of the difficult situation that we are in terms of grants funded by NIH. In relation to the field of reproductive immunology is even worst due to: lack of appropriate reviewers at the study sections that are familiar with the field or understand the field. The feeling is that there is not a clear clinical application that could be obtained from many of the studies. We need from the society to take an active role on promoting the field at NIH.

26th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Immunology June 15-17, 2006 Loews Vanderbilt Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee

26th annual meeting was another scientific success in our history. We would like to thank Drs. Grant Yeaman and David McGinnes for their effort and commitment.

Awards

The following are the names of Scientist who received awards during the last Annual Meeting at Nashville

26th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Immunology June 15-17, 2006 Loews Vanderbilt Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee

Recipients of travel grants:

Stefan Neubeck: Friedrich-Schiller University, Department of Obstetrics, Placenta-lab, Jena, Thuringia, Germany
Call for Nominations for Awards

The society recognizes the accomplishments of its colleagues in many ways including the presentation of various awards. Awards bestowed by the ASRI are as follows:

The Blackwell Munksgaard Award is awarded annually to a senior investigator who has made outstanding contributions to the area of reproductive immunology. Contributions can be in the area of clinical or basic research. Awardees do not need to be members of the ASRI.

The J. Christian Herr Award is given annually to a member of the ASRI or ISIR, typically in the first 10-15 years beyond accepting a faculty position, who has made outstanding achievements in basic or applied research in reproductive immunology, particularly for investigators involved in technology transfer. The J. Christian Herr Award was established to recognize J. Christian Herr, who worked for many years to promote small business through the SCORE program [Service Core of Retired Executives] of the Small Business Administration. The spirit of the award may be found in the words of Louis Pasteur: "There is no true distinction between fundamental and applied science, there is only science in the cause of humankind."

The Dr. John Gusdon Memorial New Investigator Award is awarded to a new investigator with trainee status (graduate student, postdoctoral scientist, or resident) who has made a significant contribution by presenting an outstanding research paper during the annual meeting of the ASRI. This award is given annually in memory of Dr. John Gusdon, a founding member of the ASRI, and Biographies of all the award recipients will appear in an upcoming issue of the AJRI.
an advocate of student participation in ASRI meetings.

The Distinguished Service Award is awarded periodically and not more than annually, to a member of the ASRI who has provided distinguished service to advance the goals and mission of the society.

Award nominations for the Blackwell Munskgaard, Herr, and Distinguished Service Award are due April 15, 2007. Please send a letter of nomination plus supporting materials to Dr. Alice Gilman-Sachs alice.gilman-sachs@rosalindfranklin.edu.

Any trainee (graduate student, postdoc, or resident) presenting a paper at the annual ASRI meeting can select to have his paper considered for the Gusdon Award. Persons interested in doing so should notify the chair of the Program Committee or check the appropriate box on the abstract submission form when submitting their abstract.

27th Annual Meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Immunology
May 14-16, 2007
Westin Harbor Hotel, Toronto

Meeting Chair: Charu Kaushic

Toronto, the largest city in Canada, is situated on beautiful Lake Ontario. It is home to over 3 million people and among the most diverse and multicultural locations in North America. It is easily accessible by air, road or rail. Spring temperatures are between 16C (60F) - 22 C (74F). It has dozens of local attractions, world-class shopping and entertainment and is the third largest theater city in the world. The Westin Harbor Castle is located at the harbor front of Lake Ontario. The 977-room, full-service luxury hotel can be reached within 30 minutes from Pearson International Airport. Most of the hotel rooms have beautiful views of the lake or the city skyline. It is located only minutes away from great shopping, restaurants and entertainment.

Plenary Sessions
Immunology of Infertility, endometriosis, viral and bacterial sexually transmitted infections, HIV, reproductive cancers, innate immunity in genital tract, new approaches to prevention of sexually transmitted infections, NK cells, pregnancy immunology, pre-eclampsia, fetal programming, male reproductive tract immunology, translational research.

Abstracts: Abstract deadline will be Feb 1, 2007. Conference participants are invited to submit abstracts for poster presentation. There will be poster sessions and oral presentations during the plenary sessions. Accepted abstracts will be published in the American Journal of Reproductive Immunology.

Program Details

ASRI in Canada!

27th Annual Meeting of ASRI,
Toronto, Canada
Westin Harbor Castle, May 14-16, 2007

Sunday PM
Opening Reception

Monday
8.00-8.30 Opening Remarks
8.30-10.00
Plenary Session 1
New Approaches to Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Infections
Dr. Deborah Anderson: Chair
1. Judy Lieberman, Harvard Medical School: siRNA as microbicides
2. Alexander Cole, University of Central Florida: Retrocyclins
3. Sharon Hillier, Magee Women’s Hospital, University of Pittsburg
   Topical microbicides

10.00-10.30 Tea/Coffee Break

10.30-12.30
Plenary Session 2: Mucosal responses in reproductive tract
1. Rupert Kaul, University of Toronto: T cell responses
2. Mike Russell, University of Buffalo: Humoral responses
3. Chris Miller, University of California: Mucosal vaccines
   Selected abstracts

12.30-1.30 Lunch

1.30-2.30
Keynote Lecture/Institute of Child Development and Youth Health, CIHR Lecture:
Ofer Mandelboim, Hebrew University, and Jerusalem: Novel function of NK cells at the maternal-fetal interface
2.30-2.45 Tea/Coffee Break

2.45- 4.15
Plenary Session 3: Reproductive Failure
1. Anna Zenclussen, Medical University, Berlin: Pre-eclampsia
2. Dan Lebovic, University of Michigan: Endometriosis
   Selected abstracts

4.30-5.30
Blackwell Munksgaard Lecture: Anne Croy, Queen’s University

Tuesday
8.00-9.00
Presidential Symposium
Chairperson: Joanne Kwak-Kim
Innate immunity in reproductive tract
2. Gil Mor, Yale University: TLR in pregnancy

9.00-10.30
Plenary Session 4: Clinical session on STDs
1. Kevin Ault, Emory University School of Medicine: HPV vaccines
2. Scott Gray-Owen, University of Toronto: N. Gonorrhoea and CEACAM5
   Selected abstracts

10.30-11.00 Tea/Coffee Break

11.00-12.30
Plenary Session 5: Neuro-Immuno-endocrine interactions in reproductive tract
1. Troy Ott, University of Idaho: Hormonal regulation of antiviral proteins -
2. Petra Arck, HumboldtUniversity, Berlin: Neuro-immuno-endocrine interactions in reproductive tract
   Selected talks

12.30-1.30 Lunch with roundtable discussion

1.30-2.30
Keynote Talk 2: Melissa (Pope) Robianni, Population Council, New York: DC vaccination against HIV
2.30-2.45 Tea/Coffee Break
Plenary Session 6: Reproductive cancers
1. Antonin Bukovsky, University of Tennessee: Ovarian Cancer immunotherapy and origin of germ cells
2. K. Odunsi, Roswell Park Cancer Institute: Ovarian cancer immunotherapy and peptide vaccination
Selected talks

4.30-6.30
Poster Session/ Wine and Cheese
5.30 ASRI Council meeting

Wednesday
8.00-9.30
Plenary Session 7: Male reproductive tract
1. Ina Dobrinsky, University of Pennsylvania: Germ cell transplantation
2. Jeff Pudney, Boston University: Innate immunity in male reproductive tract
Selected talks

9.30 -10.30
Plenary Session 8: Translational research
Chair person: Dr. Peter Ahlering
1. G. Sher, Sher Institute of Reproductive Medicine, St Louis: Transferring the “competent embryo" to a "receptive uterine environment: The key to IVF success!
2. A. Agarwal, Cleveland Clinic, Case-Western University: Oxidative Stress and Human Reproduction

11.00-12.00
John Herr Award Talk: Chris Davies, Washington State University

12.00-1.00 Lunch

1.00- 2.30
Plenary Session 9: Genetic Programming in the fetus
1. Lester Kobzik, Harvard School of Public Health: Maternal T cell mediated transfer of asthma into fetus
2. Allan King, University of Guelph: Sex related embryo development
3. Marc-Andre Sirard, Universite Laval: Expression of genes in oocyte maturation and embryo development
2.30-2.45 Tea/Coffee Break

2.45-4.15
Plenary Session 10: Autoimmune responses in reproduction
1. Ken Tung, University of Virginia: Autoimmune ovarian failure
2. M. Ito, Tokyo Medical University: Autoimmune orchitis
Selected talks

5.00 pm Cocktail

6.30 Awards Banquet

Sessions 2-10 will have 2-3 invited speakers and 2-3 talks from selected abstracts.
Hot off the Press....
by Vikki M. Abrahams PhD.

This installment focuses on two recent publications in Nature Medicine. In "Soluble endoglin contributes to the pathogenesis of preeclampsia" (2006,12:642-649), Venkateshiva and colleagues report that "Endoglin, which is elevated in the sera of preeclamptic individuals, correlates with disease severity and falls after delivery". Endoglin (CD105) is cell surface co-receptor for TGFb1 and TGFb3, which is expressed by endothelial cells and placental syncytiotrophoblast cells. In this study the authors report that a 65kDa soluble form of endoglin (sEng) is expressed in normal placenta at low levels and highly expressed in placentae from pregnancies complicated by preeclampsia. Moreover, they report that sEng is present in the sera of pregnant women, barely detectable in the circulation of non-pregnant women, and is elevated in the sera from women with preeclampsia. Circulating levels of sEng in patients with preeclampsia, also correlated with disease severity with levels highest in those patients also exhibiting HELLP syndrome. In vitro studies have demonstrated that sEng prevents TGFb mediated effects on endothelial cells, inhibited endothelial tube formation, increased capillary permeability and promoted the anti-angiogenic action of sFlt. More importantly, in vivo they found that administration of sEng together with sFlt induced a severe preeclamptic-like syndrome. Together, this study suggests that sEng may be a new diagnostic or prognostic biomarker for preeclampsia.

Continuing the theme of pregnancy, Hanna et al., have an advance online publication: "Decidual NK cells regulate key developmental processes at the human fetal-maternal interface". The authors report that NK cells isolated from first trimester decidual (dNK) express and secrete higher levels of the chemokines, IL-8, IP-10 and RANTES when compared with peripheral blood NK cells (PBNK). Furthermore, dNK, but not PBNK cells were able to promote trophoblast cell invasion into matirgel. These in vitro observations were then supported by an elegant in vivo model in which a matrigel plug containing different NK cell subsets was placed subcutaneously in nude mice. Trophoblast cells were then injected around the plug. Upon removal and analysis of the matrigel, only the dNK cells recruited trophoblast cells. Decidual NK cells were also found to express high levels of angiogenic factors, such as VEGF and PLGF. Indeed, dNK but not PBNK cells promoted endothelial cell migration and tube formation. These studies strongly support the notion that decidual NK cells actively promote the trophoblast invasion and changes in vasculature that are required for a normal pregnancy.

If you know an interesting “hot” article that would like to share with ASRI members please contact Vikki Abrahams at: vikki.abrahams@yale.edu

Books:

Immunology of Pregnancy
Springer/Lanes Bioscience 2006.
Editor:Gil Mor http://www.springer.com

Immunology of Gametes and Embryo Implantation, Karger
Editor:U.R.Markert,
Link: Immunology of Gametes and Embryo Implantation
CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR ASRI OFFICERS

Dear ASRI members:

Nominations are welcome to fill two Councillor vacancies in the ASRI Executive Council. Self-nominations are encouraged as are nominations of colleagues (please obtain their permission first). Details of the duties of Councillor can be found at the ASRI website at http://theasri.org/about/const.html

The term is for three years.

Please submit your nominations by January 15, 2007 to Peter Hansen at hansen@animal.ufl.edu

All nominations will be considered by the Nominations Committee (Pete Hansen, Don Torry, and Carolyn Coulam) and a slate of candidates for election prepared. Thanks for your support of ASRI.

FUTURE MEETINGS OF ASRI
2007 - Toronto, ON (C. Kaushic)
2008 - Chicago, IL (J. Luborsky)
2009 - Gainesville, FL (P. Hansen, M. Brown)

News from the AJRI EDITORIAL BOARD

We have had a number of excellent publications in the journal this year. We still have room for many more. Remember and most importantly, this is your journal and its quality depends on the quantity and quality of your submissions received by the journal. We are now at the time of year when new members of the editorial board are being selected by the ASRI publication committee. I would like to request that everyone interested submit their names or names of someone that they feel would be an excellent addition to editorial board. The editorial board is selected for a three year term and during that term it is suggested that each member submit at least one basic manuscript and submit one review or solicit the submission of a review for the journal. Editorial board members are also on the reviewers list but usually only 2-3 reviews per year. Looking at the current makeup of the board we are under represented by both women and non-U.S. members. I encourage each of you to consider this as we add new members to the board. At this time I would like to thank those members that will be leaving the board this year. Remember you are still on the reviewers list.

In the near future we will be publishing abstracts, proceeding and reviews for meeting of the ISIR, ASIR and European Congress of Reproductive Immunology. I look especially forward to a special edition to be edited by Dr. Petra Arck and Dr. Sandra Blois and to be published in the summer. This will contain many currently controversial topics and opinions. In advance I would like to thank Drs. Rukavina, Kauschic, as well as Drs. Arck and Blois who will be involved in editing these special proceedings and abstracts.

Best regards
Kenneth Beaman

News from our members:
ASRI Member Awarded Honorary Doctor of Medicine Degree from Sweden

Dr. Surendra Sharma, Professor of Pediatrics and Deputy Director of Center of Biomedical Research Excellence for Perinatal Biology, is a long-standing ASRI member and serves as its current Treasurer. He was recently awarded Honorary Doctor of Medicine by the Faculty of Health Sciences of Linkoping
University, Linkoping, Sweden. Dr. Sharma has nearly a decade of collaborative ventures with Linkoping University (LiU). He has made it possible for LiU clinicians/researchers to visit and work at his excellent laboratory facilities at Women and Infants Hospital-Brown University. Dr. Sharma has served as a visiting professor at LiU during 2000-01, at which time he took an active part in reproduction immunology/medicine research, and was active in introducing new technologies. His scholarly contacts at LiU are numerous, ranging from laboratory analysis to co-authoring of scientific journals. The Honorary Doctor ceremonies took place from May 11-14, 2006 in twin cities, Linkoping and Norrkoping, and entailed ceremonial lunches and meetings with the Governor of the province and President and Dean of Medicine of the University along with other recipients and dignitaries. Dr. Sharma also presented a talk on “Immune Programming of Fetal Loss and Premature Parturition”. The award ceremony was attended by 550 people with a rendition by Swedish Symphony Orchestra at Norrkoping. Some other notable recipient of honorary degrees in science, industry, and politics were Mr. Carl-Henric Svanberg, President and CEO of Sony Ericsson, and Prof. Lu-Yongxiang, Chairman and Minister of Chinese Academy of Sciences.

**Upcoming Meetings on the field of Reproductive Immunology**

18th Israeli Medical Association World Fellowship International Conference in Jerusalem, Israel, April 11 to April 15.

12th International Congress on Antiphospholipid Antibodies in Florence, Italy April 18 to April 20, 2007

International Congress of Reproductive Immunology in Opatija, Croatia, June 10-14, 2007

ImmunoRio 2007 13th International Congress of Immunology in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil August 21 to August 25, 2007

5th European Congress of Reproductive Immunology ECRI held in Berlin, Germany August 30 to September 2, 2007

IFPA2007 Kingston, Ontario Canada Aug 17-21

**Announcement:**

We are looking members for website committee and membership committee. For the web site committee, we are looking for 2 members who have excellent computer knowledge. For the membership committee, we are looking for at least one member from European countries and one from Asian countries. Please contact Stephanie Lee at slee@theasri.org if you want to serve for these committees.